

# Earth Day 2006

## LOUISIANA STYLE

*Month-long activities throughout Louisiana highlight Earth Day 2006.*

### **April 10, 2006 – Paulina, La. (St. James Parish)**

New River Soil and Water Conservation District worked with the 4-H clubs, parish government and local businesses by participating in a tree planting ceremony held on April 10, 2006 under the pavilion at Paulina Park. Over 100 4-H members from Lucher Jr. High and High School, Paulina Elementary and St. Peter Channel 4-H clubs were part of the planting team who gathered to plant 110 native Cypress, Savannah Holly, and Drake Elm trees. As part of the team effort the District helped prepare the planting site and assisted 4-H members with planting their trees.

The ceremony opened under the pavilion with the pledges, an invocation, a special tree blessing, and a welcome from the St James Parish President who thanked the group for helping to make Paulina Park a nicer place. First on the agenda was a presentation by elementary school 4-H members who listed several things that trees provide us with, followed by a “How to Plant Trees” demonstration from high school club members. Next, everyone moved to the area where the first tree was to be planted and dedicated. This part of the program began with the 4-H directors and other community leaders who shoveled and correctly positioned the tree into the hole. While the tree was being held in place, graduating 4-H members came forward and placed a time capsule bottle at the base of the tree. To represent the people of the parish, the St James Parish President brought soil from the grounds of the Courthouse and spread it over the tree’s roots. To fill in the hole, 4-H leaders added soil from the grounds of each school to represent all of the 4-H members. Father Frank added the soil around the trunk to represent God’s blessings for trees. The tree was set firmly into place and watered. Finally, the 4-H members were given their trees to plant in designated areas of the park. As they planted their chosen trees, each group or individual added soil and water from the yards of their own homes to signify that this was their adopted tree.

### **April 12, 2006 – Lafayette, La.**

Earth Day celebrations were held at UL of Lafayette earlier than the official Earth Day of April 22. On April 12, 2006, students and faculty walked around the grounds in front of Hamilton Hall listening to presentations made by several local, state and federal agencies and businesses.

**April 12, 2006 – Lafayette, La. (Cont'd)**

A booth was set up by NRCS with pictures depicting wildlife, career opportunities, current Earth Team projects and an over view of natural resources. Brochures and posters were given out to those in attendance. A meal was provided for lunch for any of the students attending the day's activities; a presentation was made by a local horticulturist, on tree preservation and soil compaction. Approximately 100 students and faculty were available.

Those represented included USDA NRCS and the Earth Team; NOAA; DEQ; Bob's Tree Service; Bayou Vermilion District; KRVS; campus environmental groups and local farming operators. Students in the Applied Sciences curriculum were also interested in internship and careers with the agencies represented.

**April 13, 2006 – Many, La.**

Project WET celebration and Earth Day were celebrated events with students of Sabine Parish schools. Over 277 children, 13 4H-leaders, 9 Earth Team volunteers and 21 educational presenters provided information on the environment. The District received a grant from Nestle Waters of America to host the event. Also on-going for Earth Day is a month long poster contest with the district.

**April 19, 2006 – Monroe, La.**



Earth Day was held on April 19, 2006 at the Jack Hayes Elementary School, Monroe, La. Erika Huber, District Secretary for D'arbonne/Bouef River SWCD, was instrumental in getting donated trees for the Earth Day/Arbor Day project. Students in Ms. Alford and Ms. Gibson's class planted a Cherry Bark and Nutall Oak donated from the RC&D office in Rayville. A sign placed in front of the trees proclaims the name of the tree, classes involved, tree identification along with Earth Team/NRCS logo.

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**April 22, 2006 – Alexandria, La.**



Employees at the NRCS State Office and Alexandria Field Office participated with other environmental groups at the Zoo of Alexandria. The hands-on soil building activity was the hit of the event. Each child could build the various layers of materials that make-up soil and actually eat the materials. Information packets including a description of each layer of material that makes up soil and a “S.K. Worm” certificate was provided to over 270 children and young adults. Total attendance at the event was 1400 children and adults.

**April 22, 2006 –Jennings, La.**



Earth Day celebration held at the Oil and Gas Museum I-10 Park at Jennings, La. on April 22, 2006. The Fishing Tournament brought in 250-300 children (ages 5-15), and adults participated. There were nine educational booths set around the area of the park which included hands-on soil profiles, soil building – “taste the difference” activity, wildlife habitat, backyard conservation and bird habitats, pollution Enviroscape model, 4H casting event (LSU AG) and the local parish D.A.R.E. Program. Prizes were provided through sponsor donations. Lunch was provided to all. Earth Team volunteers were on hand to assist with the booths, registration, and cooking the hot dogs. Several state, federal and local agencies participated in the growing event. The area is a stopping point for motorists on the Interstate Hwy system to rest, view live alligators, walk around the man-made lake and the perfect spot for the Earth Day event.

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**April 22, 2006 – Franklin, La.**



Earth Day in Franklin, La. was held jointly with the Third Annual Black Bear Festival. The event hosted by USFWS - Bayou Teche Wildlife Refuge included several exhibitors such as NRCS, LDWF, Chitimacha Tribe Representatives, Atchafalaya Basinkeepers, Black Bear Conservation Committee, Acadiana Park Nature Station, and representatives for Coastal Wetlands Planning & Protection Act all providing information on several subjects that focus on the bear, conservation education and Earth Day. The materials given at the NRCS booth publicized NRCS and SWCD programs. Additional information was made available on Farm Bill Programs as well. Approximately 500 people through the “Bear-y Patch” where the NRCS booth was located.

**April 23, 2006 – Baton Rouge, La.**



The site was downtown Baton Rouge, La. The weather was perfect for hundreds of children, parents and exhibitors to enjoy the celebration. There were many booths with the same theme, “the environment”. NRCS held court in front of the Governor’s Mansion or old State Capital Building.

Several hundred children, their parents or guardians, and many interested individuals stopped to participate and make their own soil planners and received a conservation tattoo along with other Capital SWCD giveaways.